

[page 1]

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My dear Dr Wyland:-

I have received hundreds o letters o congratulation on having reached the eightieth year of my life—telegrams, cablegrams, cards, &c. running up in to the hundreds—but no letter that I have received has touched my heart more than your kind letter of December 4. As I read it sitting up in bed this morning, tears of gratitude filled my eyes for such a splendid letter, expressing love and good-will and appreciation of my life's work.

My life has been a happy one from childhood. My mother was one of the most devoted, affectionate, kind mothers that ever lived. The fact that I have made a good record in life is due to her. Twice I was expelled from school as a youngster, and would undoubtedly have stayed out of school but knowing how my expulsion would break the heart of my other, I shed tears and begged the pardon of the teachers who expelled me and was reinstated. It was an outrage the first time I was expelled, and all wrong. The second time I considered it an outrage also because of the treatment I received. Some time when we are together I shall tell of the circumstances. The teacher that expelled m upon one occasion afterwards asked me to do something as a favor to her. I said: "Well, I don't know why I should do anything as a favor to you."

She said: "Don't' you like me?"

I said: "Out of school, very much indeed," (she was a fine woman, kind and considerate) "but I do not like you in school because you have favorites and you are not fair."

She said: "I would like to know in what respect I a not fair."

I said: "Well, I write a very nice hand, and you have me help you when making up some of your records. I find that in the last quarter you have given one of your pets a hundred in mathematics, and he missed a number of problems, and you have given me eighty, and I didn't miss a single problem. I have contempt for anybody who makes records of that kind."

She said: "Why, they tell me that you are one of my favorites."

I said: "Anybody who tells you that tells you what is not true."

[page 2]

I was offended as a youngster in Sunday School by some treatment I received, and I said, "The Sunday School can go to hell," and I went home and said I would never go back. My superintendent came and pleaded with me and got me back into Sunday School, and to the day of his death he had my undying love and respect for converting me.

I was a very impulsive individual as a child, but I had one of the calmest mothers that ever lived. I am sending you a little book entitled "As a Man Thinketh" by James Allen, in which there is a chapter on "Serenity". When I read it I wrote at the end of the chapter, "My mother and her sisters were the most serene women I ever knew in my life. I never saw either one of them angry. Unless they could say something good of people they said nothing."

I am giving myself the pleasure of sending you a photograph taken from a painting by the same artist who painted the one of me on the cover of the Improvement Era. When my mother passed away my nearest and dearest lifelong friend, who was not a member of the Church, the general manager at one time for the United Kingdom of Great Britain of the New York Life Insurance Company, wrote me a very fine letter, and among other things he said (he being an agnostic) "If the god of nature ever did stamp nobility upon any human countenance, he did upon the face of dear Aunt Rachel."

My mother for many years kept boarders for a living and Anthony W. Ivins' sister, my cousin, waited on the table free of charge for my mother when she kept boarders, and afterwards when she had no boarders she paid her, and all the boarders adopted the title of "Aunt Rachel."

Colonel Hawes told Mr. Kingsley, the manager of the New York Life Insurance Company that of all the women he had ever met in his life, barring only his wife and mother, he never met a woman that he loved as much as he did my mother. Darwin Kingsley was at that time on his way home from a trip to the Coast. He gave a dinner at our principal hotel. The Governor was absent and I was moved up one chair, thereby becoming the guest of honor, which was not intended for me. I had very pleasant relations with Mr. Kingsley and his wife up to the time of his death, and I also had very pleasant relations with Mr. Buckner, Vice-president of the New York Life Insurance Company.

I don't know whether I have ever told you or not, but I am sure that 80% if not more of all the personal letters I write are talked to my dictaphone while lying in bed in the early morning hours. Last Wednesday morning I commenced talking to the dictaphone at 5:30, Thursday Morning at 4:30, yesterday morning at 2:30. Years ago I suffered intensely with insomnia. I went to the Coast time and time again to keep from breaking down because of lack of sleep. More than once I have slept for twelve solid hours for three or four nights after getting down to sea level. Upon one occasion, after a June Conference of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, at which I presided on account of the absence of President Joseph F. Smith, the strain had been so great that I broke down completely and

was in a rightful condition after the conference closed. The doctor told me I must go to the coast the next day, or I was liable

[page 3]

to go insane for lack of sleep. I told him if there was any danger of my going insane there were some things I wanted to say and do, and therefore I would not start for the Coast until the 4th of July, but that I would stay in bed for several hours in the mornings resting, and if anyone telephone my office the answer would be that I had not yet come to the office. If they telephoned to my home they were to be told that I would be in my office at one o'clock in the afternoon. I left for the Coast on the 4th of July.

When I went to England I learned to take a nap after my lunch. I only weighted 139 pounds when I left or Europe, and I now weight 180 I gained forty pounds in England, ad have added another forty since I came home My health is as nearly perfect I believe as a man's could be at eighty years of age. I eat well, sleep well and can work from ten to twelve hours a day without feeling the least bit tired. I came home last Tuesday from a trip to Chicago, where I went to organize a Stake, and stopped off at Omaha to attend a luncheon in the principle hotel there by Car R Gay, President of the Union Pacific railroad. The banquet being in honor of Mr. ad Mrs. Gray's fiftieth anniversary of their wedding. There were 1400 Old Timers present and about 150 invited guest. My wife sat next to Mrs. Gray and therefore would be considered the guest of honor. I was never more surprised and almost overwhelmed in my life than to have my wife practically the guest of honor, with e sitting next to her, and my daughter next to e, with the oldest retire engineer of the road next to her.

I m sure that Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday I have averaged fully twelve hours' work. One day I did feel rather tired for the first time in years. I laid down on a long at home for about half an hour or a little more to rest. I haven't the language to express my gratitude for the splendid health I enjoy.

I thank you from the bottom of m hear for expressing the hope that I shall live to, provided y faculties can be retained and that I can have good health I want to live just as long as I can be of service.

I retired last night at one o'clock ad slept until five this morning. This is unusual with me. I Generally wake up along about two o'clock, take an hour's exercise, in bed mostly, then try to go to sleep, and failing, sit up and talk to the Dictaphone for an hour or two, then go back to bed and have a fine sleep. Yesterday morning I slept two hours after talking to the Dictaphone, and the morning before I got two hours and a half. This morning I did not wake up until five, and took my usual exercises, and at 5:15 I am sitting up talking to my Dictaphone, writing this long letter to you I was so impressed with the genuineness of the sincere expressions in regard to my life's labors contained in your let, that I decided to write one letter, and one only, and that one to you this morning before going to my office. I hope you won't get tired in reading it, I believe you will really enjoy it.

I want to tell you a little of my mother's life. She was

[page 4]

in Nauvoo, and she admired and loved the Prophet Joseph Smith, as all of the people did almost beyond their power of expression. Hearing that he was teaching plural marriage and that he undoubtedly was going to propose marriage to her, in order to avoid it she went back to Tom's River, New Jersey, with the classical expression that she "would sooner go to hell as a virtuous woman than to heaven as a whore." It was \the only/ expression of the kind that I have ever heard quoted as coming from her. But in the providences of the Lord she became converted beyond a doubt that plural marriage, properly practiced, was all right and that the Lord had really given the revelation to Joseph Smith to introduce plural marriage among the faithful saints. She came to Utah. My father had buried his first wife, who died two days before the arrival of the first company of cattle trains. He commanded the third company. The first company arrived one day, the second the next, and the third the next, making the three original companies there in two days' time. They traveled about ten miles apart. My mother became the sixth wife of my father of those who were married in the Salt Lake Valley. The first and second wives had some who were three years old when father died, and I was only nine days old when father died. There were six wives with one son each, and all were healthy, vigorous and strong.

It is stated by many that in plural marriage the sock runs down intellectually, physically and morally. I am the horrible example of it having run out in my father's family. It may be of interest to you to know that there never was a time that more than two per cent of our people were amenable to the Edmunds-Tucker law. Out of 150,000 people in the United States belonging to the Church when plural marriage was practiced and there were a little less than three thousand men in plural marriage. Giving each man three wives it would not quite average 8% of the population that were in polygamous relations. One day one of the members of the Church said to me: "You know, Brother Grant, now that we have had to abandon plural marriage I will tell you I believe a mistake was made, and that plural marriage was wrong."

I said: "Well, my dear friend, do you believe the statement of the Savior that by their fruits ye shall know them?"

"Of course I do."

"Do you believe that the men who are now Apostles in the Church are the right men in the right place, and that they reached their position because of their splendid lives?"

"I do."

"Then suppose we make a comparison as to the fruits of plural marriage and the fruits of monogamy. There were four men in the Council of the Apostles who were too old to have been born as the products of plural marriage. There were eight young enough to have been born of parents who were in plural marriage, and seven of them were the products of that marriage, and one only not the product, and that one has since been dropped from the Council because he insisted upon taking another wife after the manifesto was issued against plural marriage being practiced. This manifesto was issued because, as you know, one of the articles of our faith reads, "We believe in being

subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates; in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law.” We appealed to the supreme court of the United States and the decision was against us, and it was then the Manifesto was issued. Many people have said that I have taught and actually married another wife since the Manifesto, but it is an absolute falsehood. I have never tried to marry another wife, have never said a word of love to any other woman since. We have excommunicated many from the Church who has taken a plural wife since the declaration of President Joseph F. Smith made some years after the Manifesto was issued. \The President of Mexico/ said he wanted babies born in the Mormon Church and favored giving men plural wives in Mexico, which we did, and some of them came back into the United States and lived with their wives here. Then President Smith took the ground that no man should be permitted to have a plural wife either in Mexico or any other part of the world. But for the declarations given by both Presidents Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith, I don’t know but that I might have tried to persuade some woman to marry me and live in Mexico, so that I might have had a son. The Lord in his kind providences allowed me to have a couple of sons, but they were taken away by death, one being four and the other seven years of age when they died.

You are right in paying a wonderful compliment to my wife. She is a marvelous woman. My first wife was equally as fine, in some respects almost more marvelous. The very night that I proposed to her I said, “Now, my dear, it is a mean thing perhaps to do, but I am the product of plural marriage, and I expect some day to have more than one wife.”

She laughed and said: “I have known that always. One of the reasons I have been willing to marry you is that I believe that every good man who is capable of supporting more than one wife ought to take them. My father has four wives, and he is my ideal of all the men I have ever known. Uncle Erastus Snow, who married my mother’s sister, also has four wives, and he is my second best model.

Then she said to me: “Why did you not marry Emily Wells instead of asking me to marry you? I know she is in love with you.”

I smiled and said: “Well, I will be perfectly frank with you. I was in love with Emily, although I never told her so. I was born next door to her home and we were familiar as little children. One night in coming home from a party she railed against plural marriage as a crime and a taint, and I quit taking her out and shed some better tears, but I was thankful that I had never spoken any words of love to her. I then looked around for somebody else who I would like as a wife, and I discovered you.”

She said: “Oh well, you will get her yet. She is trying now to marry a non-member of the Church, and she is too fine and splendid a girl to do that. Some day, when you get ready to take another wife, although I would sooner you would marry anybody than Emily, I want you to give her the privilege of refusing you and I would feel condemned if I didn’t let her have that privilege, and she should afterwards

[Page 6]

Converted her, and she became my third wife.

I think I have given you about all that any mortal ought to give a man in one letter pardon me for giving you so much of my history.. I can truthfully say that my life has been a success with my three wives. When my first wife came to die her last message to me was to say, "Heber, I can die happy because the woman that I love and you love, whose ambitions and faith are exactly the same as mine, is to raise up five little girls and my baby boy."

When my wife Emily came to die from cancer, from which she had suffered for years, she said to her oldest daughter: "I want you to know that my life with your father, although I had to live on the "underground" for some years, and you were born in England, and I have had to get up and run sometimes in the middle of the night to keep from being arrested, yet if I had my life to live over again, with all its trials and tribulations, I would do the same again,, as my life has been satisfactory with your father."

I am sending you a very personal matter that I debated for quite a while about allowing it to be printed, namely, a letter written to my daughter Rachel, my first wife's oldest daughter, and an article published in the Relief Society Magazine by my oldest daughter by my third wife, Emily. I never felt more grateful for anything in having my two wives pass away, notwithstanding the trials of plural marriage, and there are plenty, as there is no woman on earth that is not a trial to have her husband have more than one wife, - to realize that no one could have been more loyal to me than two of my wives had been, who had passed on.

Assuring of my deep appreciation of your letter as much if not more than any letter I have received – it brought tears to my eyes I pray the Lord to bless you abundantly and wish you peace, prosperity and happiness during the entire journey of life, and pray also that there may be an eternity of joy in store for you and your loved ones in the life to come, I am,

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

Sig Heber J. Grant.